

***AUDIO DESCRIPTION: The Visual Made Verbal***  
Making Visual Images Accessible to People  
Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision

With **Joel Snyder**, PhD--President, Audio Description Associates, LLC;  
Director, Audio Description Project, American Council of the Blind

Summary: At this interactive, multi-media session, participants will experience how Audio Description (AD) makes visual images accessible for people who are blind or have low vision—the visual is made verbal. Using words that are succinct, vivid, and imaginative, describers convey the visual image that is not fully accessible to a significant segment of the population: over 21 million Americans who are blind or have trouble seeing even with correction (American Foundation for the Blind, 2008).

Through this hands-on workshop, describer training will be detailed according to the Fundamentals of Audio Description developed by Joel Snyder. Participants will experience how description makes performing and visual arts programming, websites and myriad activities more accessible to patrons who are blind or have low vision – and more enjoyable for all.

For example, anyone who presents visual images (museum docents, teachers, health care workers) can use AD techniques to “translate” the visual image to words. Through careful observation and the skillful use of language, he/she enlivens the presentation for all listeners.

In addition, in the United States, the Americans With Disabilities Act and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act focus on access; these regulations apply to the broad range of American businesses and organizations as well as Federal agencies: Section 508 requires the Federal government to make its electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. Inaccessible technology interferes with an individual's ability to obtain and use information quickly and easily. Most recently, President Obama signed into law the “21<sup>st</sup> Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act” which establishes a mandate for audio description on broadcast television.

Finally, the program will introduce attendees to the varied AD programs and resources available world-wide including ACB's Audio Description Project website and activities, the U.K.'s Royal National Institute of Blind People, Independent Television Commission and Audio Eyes resources, and guidelines/literature established by the Described and Captioned Media Program, the Audio Description Coalition, Art Education for the Blind, and "The Didactics of Audio Visual Translation" by Dr. Jorge Diaz-Cintas.

Program Goals/Outcomes: At the conclusion of the session, participants will know/experience:

- who are "the blind"?
- the history of Audio Description
- Active Seeing / Visual Literacy
- how to develop skills in concentration and observation
- the art of "editing" what you see
- using language to conjure images
- how to use the spoken word to make meaning
- developing an Audio Description program

Who Should Attend: all interested in an overview of Audio Description—particularly arts providers (performing arts producers/presenters, museum/visual art professionals), educators, writers, artists, government personnel, health-care workers

Content Level: Beginning

Prerequisite Knowledge: None

Format: The session will involve approximately 40% lecture, 20% powerpoint-slide-DVD presentation, and 40% interactive participation throughout the session via give-and-take/discussion and, as time allows, practica during which participants will draft and voice description of still images or videotape excerpts.

Training Leader: As one of the nation's first audio describers and having trained audio describers in a dozen states and abroad, Joel Snyder will share his 30+ years of experience with audio description and services for people who are blind or have low vision including the screening of excerpts from nationally broadcast videos with description written and voiced by Mr. Snyder. Joel Snyder is the President of Audio Description Associates, LLC ([www.audiodescribe.com](http://www.audiodescribe.com)) and Director of the American Council of the Blind's Audio Description Project ([www.acb.org/adp](http://www.acb.org/adp)).

September 30, 2013

Outline of the Audio Description Session

Ljubljana, Slovenia

Two-and-a-half hours

**Part One** – One hour, 15 minutes

- \* Audio Description History and Theory
- \* Concentration / Observation
- \* Editing What You See
- \* Language
- \* Speech Skills

BREAK – 15 minutes

**Part Two** – One hour

- \* Viewing/analysis of audio described excerpts
- \* Practicum – Individual/group description sessions with selected still images and video excerpts
- \* Mechanics – Job Prospects;
- \* Review – open discussion / Q and A